



FRIENDS OF THE BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL

Sudbury to Vote on Land Acquisition for Phase 3

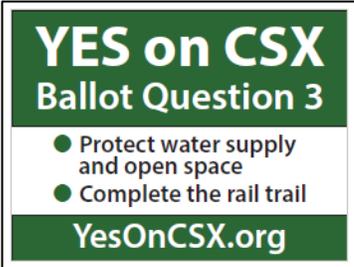
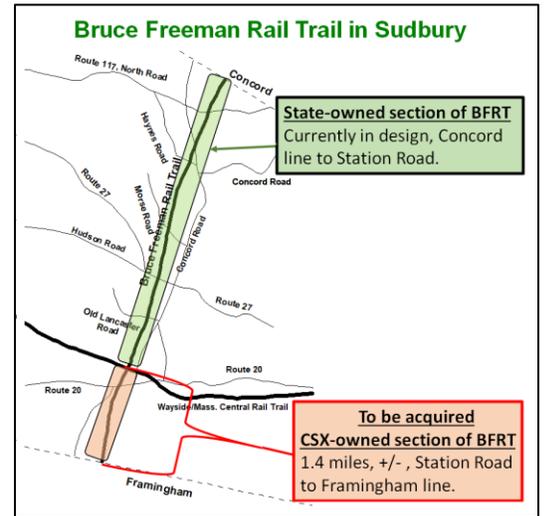


The CSX corridor looking south from Rte. 20 toward Framingham

On the November ballot Sudbury voters will be asked to approve funding for the acquisition of the 1.4 miles of the CSX-owned corridor in Sudbury (part of BFRT Phase 3) from Station Road to the Framingham line. Sudbury's Annual Town Meeting in September approved an article to purchase the corridor. Now voters must also authorize borrowing to complete the acquisition. The purchase price of \$1,145,500 is expected to be reduced by Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation grants of \$400,000, covering about 1/3 of the purchase price.

This section of the CSX rail corridor is a critical component of the BFRT through Sudbury. It will provide direct access to retail businesses, athletic facilities, recreational areas and schools. Purchasing this land will protect the Town's drinking water supply and will prevent another utility corridor from coming through the heart of Sudbury.

A ballot question committee "Yes On CSX" has been organized by Sudbury residents to educate voters about Question 3 and to advocate for its approval. Their yard sign is shown here.



YesonCSX committee yard sign

Completion of Design for Phase 2D in Sudbury

Following the (virtual) Design Public Hearing on July 26, the 25% design for the Sudbury section of the BFRT from the Concord town line to Station Road in Sudbury (Phase 2D) was approved by MassDOT in August. The type and length of a boardwalk section just south of Hudson Road was clarified with the help of a wetlands specialist peer reviewer engaged by the Town. A Request for Proposals for the remaining design work, the 75% and 100% designs, received several bids from design consultants. Selection of the the design consultant is expected this fall.

A Town BFRT Design Task Force was created in 2017 to advise the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager and to assist in advancing the design of the project.

Framingham Voting to Adopt CPA

This November Framingham voters will be asked to approve the Community Preservation Act for the City, with a 1% tax surcharge. The 11-member Framingham City Council voted unanimously to put the CPA on the ballot this fall. Over half of the cities and towns in the state have adopted the CPA for their communities, and these funds have been used to further rail trails such as the BFRT as well as other community improvement projects.

Last year at this time, extending the BFRT into Framingham (Phase 3) faced one major hurdle: acquiring the right of way from CSX Transportation. CSX wants to sell, and Framingham wants to buy. Just add money. Like every other municipality, the current economic situation due to the coronavirus impact has made money and resources scarce.

While some funding may be available from the State, the City will need to provide most of the funds for the purchase. Approval of the CPA question this November could be a source of some of the needed funds.

The CSX spur from Framingham Center to South Sudbury has been railbanked for almost 20 years, but despite several deadline extensions, the railbank status will expire this December 1. This means that CSX could sell it in bits and pieces and the chance to develop it into an extension of the BFRT would be lost forever. Both parties would like to come to a sales agreement.

The Friends will be watching these developments closely since they are key for the extension of the trail into Framingham.

Rte. 2 Bridge to Connect Acton and Concord Sections

Construction of the much-anticipated BFRT bridge over Rte. 2 (Phase 2B), connecting Phase 2A in Acton to Phase 2C in Concord, began in May. This section of the trail will run from near Wetherbee Street in Acton to the small BFRT parking area near Commonwealth Avenue in Concord. It will also provide access to the future Gerow recreation area on Warner's Pond.



Cleared trail looking east toward Commonwealth Avenue. Note the whistle post on the right.

According to MIG Project Manager Paul Principi, all clearing and grubbing have been completed, and all rails and ties have been removed. Traffic controls on Rte. 2 have been installed, and the median crossovers for the installation of the wildlife culvert will be constructed this fall. Also a stream culvert will be installed on the Acton side of Rte. 2.



Trail construction in Acton looking north from Rte. 2. The State Police Horse Barn can be seen in the far left.

Work on a new bridge over Nashoba Brook began this year and is expected to be completed in 2021.



MassDOT rendering of the 300-foot bridge being constructed over Rte. 2

Principi expects that excavation for the bridge pier in the Rte. 2 median will begin this fall. Also, both the footing and the section of the pier that protrude from the ground will be poured. Construction of the abutments for the big bridge over Rte. 2 could also start this fall.



Old abutments from the bridge that had spanned Nashoba Brook. Rte. 2 can be seen in the background.

The Town is researching information for a new historic/interpretive panel about growing up near Warner's Pond and MCI-Concord in the early- to mid-1900s. This panel will be installed as part of the Phase 2B construction project near the Gerow recreation area.

Church Volunteers Clean Up Trail

Central Congregational Church of Chelmsford is committed to keeping the BFRT looking spectacular! Several times a year, crews from the church go out to pick up litter. This work is especially meaningful to the parishioners, since Bruce Freeman was a member of the church and his beloved wife Daphne still is today. Pictured here are kids and parents participating in rail trail clean-up as part of the church's "Make a Difference Week." This project was organized by Lynn Horton.



Chelmsford Adds Trail Amenities

The Chelmsford Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has continued to work with the Chelmsford DPW and the Chelmsford Police Department to address maintenance and safety issues along the trail in Chelmsford.

After completion of the Grist Mill Condominium development at Cushing Place, irrigation and plantings were installed along the BFRT at the Art Walk and Carol Clevon Park area. An additional bench donated by Cindy McLain was installed near the existing bench. The DPW enlarged the areas and added new compacted stone dust at the benches, a repair station, bike racks and a kiosk.



New bench and bike racks at Pond Street

In addition, interpretive displays which include a tribute to Carol Clevon, the history of the Framingham and Lowell rail line and the history of Cushing Place, were installed by Bob Morse and Bob Schneider. Special thanks to Bob Morse for leading the effort to research the display information and arrange the manufacture of the display panels.



Interpretive panels at the Carol Clevon Park

A new set of murals for the Art Walk was completed in early spring. These will replace the original murals, and two more murals will be added. The mural installation is planned for this fall. Funding for the interpretive panels and the art murals was provided by grants from the Friends.

Last summer the Town of Chelmsford received notice that a grant of \$90,000 had been awarded to the Town from the MassTrails Grant Program. These funds will be combined with approximately 25% in additional funds and an in-kind contribution from the Town and used to repair sections of the trail where root incursions have cracked and heaved the trail surface. This work is expected to be undertaken in the fall. Sections of the trail likely will be closed for short periods of time. Cooperation and understanding from trail users will be appreciated so that the work can be completed more rapidly.

Several improvements have been made at the Pond Street area. The Town DPW has prepared the site for a new kiosk, although construction of the kiosk by the Carpentry Shop at Nashoba Tech has been delayed. Also a bench for the site was donated by Eric and Elizabeth Bennett in memory of their infant son Eliot Lee. The bench was installed in early July where it provides a beautiful view of the pond. Additionally, bike racks purchased with funds donated by the Lockheed Martin Planning & SQE Performance Management Team were installed. The new bench and bike racks are much appreciated by trail users.

The Chelmsford BPAC conducted the annual trail count at the Chelmsford Art Walk/Cushing Place on Saturday, September 12. With generally nice weather, it was a very busy day on the trail with a count total of 2038, compared with an average of 1160 for the previous five years. More than 70% of users were bicyclists, somewhat higher than in previous years. About 25% of users were walkers or runners.

About 83% of cyclists were wearing helmets, comparable with recent years' counts. All cyclists are encouraged to wear a helmet when riding on the trail and on roads. Volunteer counters included Dave Antonelli, Mike Carignan, Sharon Galpin, Michael Garvin, Tom Gazda, Melinda Goodick, Robert Klinkhammer, Cindy McLain, Dennis McNurland, Steve Pustell and Bob Schneider.

Finally, the Chelmsford BPAC and the Town wish to express their thanks to the Friends for their funding the placement of portable toilets along the trail at Cushing Place and at Pond Street/Heart Pond again in 2020. The funding allowed the units to be serviced twice weekly in the months of June through September. They also thank the MassDOT for their prompt response in addressing graffiti issues in the Rte. 3 tunnel and under the I-495 underpass.



Fall foliage along the trail in Chelmsford



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Join us for the virtual Friends Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 22, 2020, 2 p.m.

<https://www.gotomeet.me/TomMichelman/2020-fbfrt-annual-members-meeting>

Rte. 2 Bridge Progress

Construction of Phase 2B has begun!
 See page 2 for more details.

Show your support by joining today!

Members will receive newsletters, notices of upcoming trail-related events and opportunities to actively promote the rail trail through a variety of volunteer activities.

The Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Membership fees and donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Yes! Sign me up as a supporter of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Conductor \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineer \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> RR Tycoon \$500+ |

*Sponsor and above receive complimentary gift.

 First Name Last Name

 Contact Name

 Address 1 (Street Address, P.O. Box, company name, c/o)

 Address 2 (Apartment, suite, unit, building, floor)

 City State Zip

 Daytime Phone Evening Phone

 Email address

YES NO

I would like to receive the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail newsletter.

Send my newsletter via email (include email address above).

Send via postal mail.

I would like to receive email updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

I am willing to receive phone calls from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

I am a trail abutter.

I would like to volunteer.

Gift: Cap BFRT Socks (S/M or L/XL) No Thanks

Please enclose a check payable to Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and mail this form to:

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
 PO Box 1192
 Concord, MA 01742

You may also join online at:
www.BruceFreemanRailTrail.org



Completing the Trail in Concord

Phase 2C currently ends at Powder Mill Road in Concord. The southern half-mile of trail will be built as part of Phase 2D in Sudbury. The Town of Concord has contracted with Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) to finalize the construction package for this last portion of the trail in Concord, per direction of MassDOT.

Initially this section was to be incorporated into the final construction package for the Sudbury portion of the project. However concerns were expressed regarding the professional survey and engineering responsibilities and liabilities. This new approach will clearly define these responsibilities once they are combined into the final bid/construction package. GPI will be working with their wetland consultant to renew the Order of Conditions for this section of the project and will be on site this fall to update the plans.

New members of Concord's BFRT Advisory Committee walked this last half-mile in late September to orient the plans to the existing conditions. The committee members will be discussing their observations and reaching out to abutters this fall to provide an update on the project. They will also work to prepare two or three proposed information panels along this section of the trail.

Phase 2C Receives Award



Marcia Rasmussen, Concord's Director of Planning and Land Management, is pictured here with the American Public Works Association Small Cities/Rural Communities Project of the Year Award for Phase 2C of the BFRT in Concord.

The award promotes excellence in the management and administration of public works projects.

Extending the BFRT into Lowell

The Friends have been working with the City of Lowell on an extension of the BFRT. It would begin at the trail's current northern end and continue north to the Target parking lot. This section of trail is called The Connector Trail. Users will be able to continue from the current end of the BFRT at the Route 3 tunnel in the Cross Point parking lot, cross the parking lot, cross Industrial Avenue, and follow alongside the River Meadow Brook up to the Target shopping center. From this Connector Trail, the plan is to have it eventually connect to a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails in the City.

The section of trail that goes from Industrial Avenue to the Target parking lot is being designed by TEC, Inc. If all goes well, the design could be completed this December. The City would then bid the project out for a spring/summer 2021 construction. There are several variables in this plan, the major one being the progression of the Covid19 pandemic. The section of the trail that crosses the parking lots near Cross Point will be addressed after the section across Industrial Avenue is completed.

Virtual Boston Marathon on BFRT

North Andover neighbors and veteran marathoners Bernie Zelitch (left) and Tom Licciardello joined other members of the Merrimack Valley Striders on September 12 to run the 124th Boston Marathon virtually on the BFRT. While there was no firing of a starter's gun, and the masses of cheering spectators were replaced by MVS members providing aid and support, club members did arrange for a tape at the finish line. Tom said that, "although there was no 'Heartbreak Hill,' 26.2 miles is still a pretty long haul, so those small rises on the trail sure mimicked it."



Eagle Scout Project for the Birds

When Adam Arthur, a member of Boy Scout Troop 32 in Acton, was looking for an Eagle project, his grandparents suggested that he put birdhouses along the trail in Acton. Since he wanted his project to involve both wildlife and building, this seemed like a perfect fit. The birdhouses are not exclusively for bluebirds; they could also be used by chickadees and a few other species. They are installed in pairs so that the sparrows can use one and leave one for other birds.



Adam raised over \$600, which he used to purchase supplies to create 30 birdhouse kits. He dropped the kits off at scout volunteers' houses and picked them up once they were finished. To help the scouts build their birdhouses, he made an instructional video which he sent to them. Adam then installed the completed bird houses along the BFRT in Acton. The scouts will clean out the bird houses every March to prepare them for spring nesting.

He was particularly interested in a project involving the BFRT saying, "My friends and I were very excited when the trail first opened, and we use it all the time to safely get to each other's houses."



Signage along the trail asking users to wear masks and stay 6 feet apart while using the trail.

“Go Out Doors” Art Project Installed on BFRT in Concord

The “Go Out Doors” art exhibit, featuring 12 professionally painted doors, was installed along the trail in Concord last summer. It was sponsored by The Umbrella Arts Center in Concord. Grants from the Friends and the Foundation for Metrowest provided the major funding for this project. The doors will remain in place through November.



A video about the project and the trail, created by Concord Community TV, can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/BFRT-GoOutdoors>.

Friends Annual Meeting - Virtual

Sunday, November 22, 2020, 2 to 4 p.m.

Since our Bylaws do not specify that our official meetings must be conducted physically, we will conduct our Annual Members Meeting virtually for the first time. Please see below for the details and to save the date.

We look forward to seeing you there (virtually).

Join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone:

<https://www.gotomeet.me/TomMichelman/2020-fbfrt-annual-members-meeting>

You can also dial in on your phone:

+1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 982-772-653

Are you new to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when the meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install>

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Barbara Pike and Len Simon

For Further Information:

Visit us at:

www.brucefreemanrailtrail.org

Facebook.com/BruceFreemanRailTrail

Twitter.com/FriendsofBFRT

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